

Claims

1.-36. (Canceled)

37. (Previously Presented) A computer-readable medium not consisting of a signal, the computer readable medium having stored thereon computer-executable instructions operable to cause a computer to perform a method of querying a database for information pertaining to a software application installed on a computer system, the computer-readable medium comprising:

computer-executable instructions for generating a first application identifier for the software application, the software application comprising a plurality of files on the computer system, the files comprising at least an executable file for the software application and graphical icon data for one or more icons associated with the software application, the executable file having a name, wherein generating the first application identifier comprises generating a hash value with a hashing algorithm applied to an application-specific binary data block formed from a subset of the graphical icon data for one or more icons associated with the software application and the name of the executable file for the software application, and wherein the subset of the graphical icon data comprises at least one icon that visually represents the software application in a graphical user interface;

computer-executable instructions for sending a query for a unique identifier for the software application to the database, the query comprising the first application identifier;

computer-executable instructions for receiving a response to the query from the database, wherein the response comprises an indication of whether the software application is of a particular application type and the unique identifier for the software application, and wherein the unique identifier differs from the first identifier;

computer-executable instructions for sending a metadata request to a metadata service, the metadata request comprising the unique identifier;

computer-executable instructions for receiving metadata for the software application in response to the metadata request; and

computer-executable instructions for displaying information from the response to the query from the database along with the metadata received in response to the metadata request in a window of the graphical user interface along with information for one or more other software applications of the particular application type.

38. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 37 wherein the application type is game, and wherein the metadata service is a games metadata service.

39. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 38 wherein the window of the graphical user interface is part of a gaming activity center, the computer readable medium further comprising:

computer-executable instructions for determining whether to add the software application to a list of games in the gaming activity center based on the indication of whether the software application is of the particular application type.

40. (Previously Presented) The computer readable medium of claim 37 further comprising:

computer-executable instructions for receiving a second response to the query from the database, wherein the second response comprises an indication that no match for the first application identifier was found in the database; and

computer-executable instructions for performing a manual search of the database responsive to the indication that no match for the first application identifier was found in the database.

41. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 37 wherein at least part of the graphical icon data is obtained from an icon file.

42. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 37 wherein the one or more icons are selected from a set of plural graphical icons having different sizes and resolutions.

43. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 37 wherein the response to the query indicates that a match for the first application identifier was found in the database.

44. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 37 further comprising computer-executable instructions for displaying a visual indicator of the software application along with visual indicators of the other software applications in the graphical user interface.

45. (New) A method of querying a database for information pertaining to a software application installed on a computer system, the method comprising:

in the computer system, generating a first application identifier for the software application, the software application comprising a plurality of files on the computer system, the files comprising at least an executable file for the software application and graphical icon data for one or more icons associated with the software application, the executable file having a name, wherein generating the first application identifier comprises generating a hash value with a hashing algorithm applied to an application-specific binary data block formed from a subset of the graphical icon data for one or more icons associated with the software application and the name of the executable file for the software application, and wherein the subset of the graphical icon data comprises at least one icon that visually represents the software application in a graphical user interface;

in the computer system, sending a query for a unique identifier for the software application to the database, the query comprising the first application identifier;

in the computer system, receiving a response to the query from the database, wherein the response comprises an indication of whether the software application is of a particular application type and the unique identifier for the software application, and wherein the unique identifier differs from the first identifier;

in the computer system, sending a metadata request to a metadata service, the metadata request comprising the unique identifier;

in the computer system, receiving metadata for the software application in response to the metadata request; and

in the computer system, displaying information from the response to the query from the database along with the metadata received in response to the metadata request in a window of the graphical user interface along with information for one or more other software applications of the particular application type.

46. (New) The method of claim 45 wherein the application type is game, and wherein the metadata service is a games metadata service.

47. (New) The method of claim 46 wherein the window of the graphical user interface is part of a gaming activity center, the method further comprising:

in the computer system, determining whether to add the software application to a list of games in the gaming activity center based on the indication of whether the software application is of the particular application type.

48. (New) The method of claim 45 further comprising:

in the computer system, receiving a second response to the query from the database, wherein the second response comprises an indication that no match for the first application identifier was found in the database; and

performing a manual search of the database responsive to the indication that no match for the first application identifier was found in the database.

49. (New) The method of claim 45 wherein the hashing algorithm is a one-way hashing algorithm.

50. (New) The method of claim 45 wherein the first application identifier is a 20-byte hash value.

51. (New) The method of claim 45 wherein at least part of the graphical icon data is obtained from an icon file.

52. (New) The method of claim 45 further comprising, comparing the first application identifier with a list of application identifiers to determine an attribute of the software application.

53. (New) The method of claim 52 wherein the attribute comprises a parental control rating for the software application.

54. (New) The method of claim 45 wherein the unique identifier indicates that metadata relating to the software application can be obtained from the metadata service.

55. (New) The method of claim 45 wherein the first application identifier is a unique fixed-length string.

56. (New) The method of claim 45 further comprising, storing a relation between the first application identifier and the unique identifier in a data file.

57. (New) The method of claim 45 wherein the application-specific binary data block further comprises registry data.

58. (New) The method of claim 45 wherein the database comprises a list of gaming-related software applications, and wherein the response to the query comprises an indicator of whether the software application is a gaming-related software application.

59. (New) The method of claim 45 wherein the query comprises a request for metadata relating to the software application, and wherein the response to the query comprises metadata relating to the software application.

60. (New) The method of claim 45 wherein the query comprises a request for parental control information relating to the software application, and wherein the response to the query comprises parental control information relating to the software application.

61. (New) The method of claim 45 wherein the one or more icons are selected from a set of plural graphical icons having different sizes and resolutions.

62. (New) The method of claim 45 wherein the response to the query indicates that a match for the first application identifier was found in the database.

63. (New) The method of claim 45 further comprising:
in the computer system, sending a shortcut link to the database; and
in the computer system, receiving a list of possible matches for the shortcut link in the database.

64. (New) The method of claim 45 further comprising, in the computer system, displaying a visual indicator of the software application along with visual indicators of the other software applications in the graphical user interface.